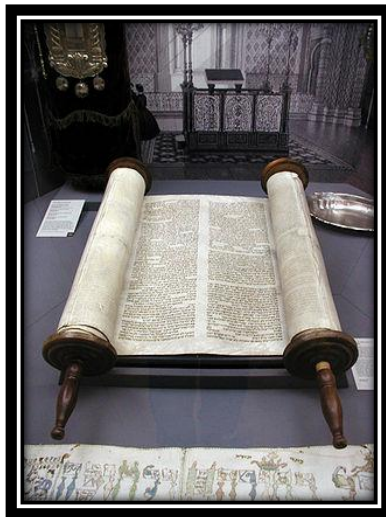


THE GOD WHO IS NOT SILENT (Hebrews 1:1)

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Have you ever felt as if God has been silent in your life? You hear people saying that they have heard from the Lord; but, personally, you wonder what that would mean?

How does God speak? Do people hear Him in an audible voice? How did He speak to Adam, or to Noah, or to Abraham? How does He speak today? Of course, it would only be mythical to suppose that He spoke in older times, but doesn't speak today? God must be unchanging.



Well, we have good news. Our God has spoken and is speaking to us even today. The only thing we need to note is to learn to listen and to obey. The Book of Hebrews in the Bible teaches us that.

It opens with this statement:

Heb 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

Heb 1:2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son

He Spoke To the Fathers

In fact, He has been speaking since the first day of creation. The Bible says in Psalm 33:6 that the heavens were made by the Word of the Lord. It also says in 2Pet 3:5 that the heavens of old and the earth standing in the water and out of the water were by the Word of God. He spoke light into existence. The sun, the moon, and the stars flung into their orbits by the power of His word. By His word, He made the beautiful blue sky, the green and grassy land, the trees of the forests, the beautiful flowers, the buzzing bees and the colorful butterflies, the chirping sparrows and the jolly elephants, the playful dolphins and the oceans' whales, they all sprang into being and received their own unique forms by the word that He said.

This world is the handiwork of the word of God. Therefore, the Psalmist cries out "The heavens tell of the glory of God. The skies display His marvelous craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make Him known. They speak without a sound or a word; their voice is silent in the skies; yet their message has gone out to all the earth, and their words to all the world." (Psalm 19:1-4, NLT). If one would only lift his eyes to the starry skies and behold those glittering lights which stud the heavens, one would be filled with wonder at the glory and splendor of the One who created them all by His Word. He spoke the world into existence. What power that could swirl this giant galactic universe into its set of orbs and orbits! The ancients trembled at the prospect of hearing the voice of God, for they knew that it was stronger than the sound of many waters. And when He did speak to the fathers, they marveled "Who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?" (Deut. 5:26).

There are a few things that the writer of Hebrews mentions to us with regard to God's speaking in the Old Testament.

By the Prophets

Firstly, it is clear here that God did not speak directly to everyone. He spoke to the fathers by the prophets. That was one reason why people in the Old Testament had to consult the prophets in order to know what God's will was. Peter tells us that these prophets did not speak by their own will or by the will of any man, but spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2Pet.1:21).

The Essence of God's Communication

Secondly, though not directly stated here, we must ask what God was in essence communicating through these prophets. The answer is found in Hebrews chapter 4:2. The gospel that was preached to us was also preached to them. Peter explains: "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you" (1Pet.1:10). They prophesied of the grace that we now experience in Jesus Christ; even as Paul writing to Titus says "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Tit.2:11). The prophets testified of Jesus Christ for "the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." (v.11). Therefore, it is said that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev.19:10) and John could boldly write "of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace" (Jn.1:16).

Bit at a Time

But, we also note, thirdly, that this testimony to the fathers was not given all at once, or at a single time. It came at various times, in other words, was given a bit at a time. The Greek word translated "various times" is *polumeros* which means "in many portions" or "in many parts", implying a spreading over a long span of time. Many of the prophecies that God spoke through the prophets were a great mystery to these prophets themselves. We are told that they inquired and searched carefully and minutely in order to know what this salvation which they prophesied was all about. The things that the Spirit of

Christ was testifying about, namely, the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow, were a great mystery to them. They were looking at bits and blurred images trying to figure out what the reality would look like, until the Glorious Son of God came; then, all these cloudy guessworks were erased and the disciples could confess that this was Christ the Son of the Living God. John testified that the Law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, and Paul writing to the Colossian Church declared that the regulations of past time were only a shadow of things to come; the reality that brings real meaning and salvation to life is of Christ (Col.2:17). Yet, we have only had a glimpse of His glory, and the knowledge that we have is nothing compared to the reality that will brighten the horizon of His return in the clouds of glory. Of course, we have a better experience than what the fathers of the Old Testament had, but there is yet to come. It is with this view that Paul writes in 1Cor.13:9,10: “For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away” and Peter writes in 2Pet.1:16: “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty” referring to their experience on the Mount of Transfiguration where Jesus’ garments glowed with such whiteness that cast them dumbstruck while a voice from heaven witnessed “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Peter continues to say “so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.” (v.19). We still await to see Him face to face; but, yet isn’t it glorious that the Father has finally spoken and sealed the testimony in His Son. Though we only know in part and we prophesy in part; yet, the revelation has been sealed. Jesus is the end of all the law and the prophets. He is the fulfillment.

Various Ways

Now, with regard to the testimony in the Old Testament, we are also told, fourthly, that it was given in various ways.

To the prophets, God spoke through visions, dreams, prophetic utterance, and word of knowledge; but, His speaking did not end there; the prophets were God's instruments to convey the message to the fathers. The prophets spoke and recorded God's message in the in those 39 books of the Old Testament. The various ways also includes those variegated styles and genres of writing, like history, poetry, aphorisms, parables, symbols, etc, through which God communicated with the people. God was not monotonous in His communication; He employed all the best methods of language in order to get His message through to the people. Also, each writer had a distinct style. So, the styles were as various as were the human instruments, for the Spirit of God worked through them and not at the expense of them. Their personality was not annulled or set aside. The prophets were never in some trance where they were totally unconscious of themselves when they were communicating the word of God. The prophets had zeal when they spoke, emotions welled up within them, of joy when they spoke of that Messianic age to come, of pain when they looked at the condition of their people around, and of wonder when they thought of those few things that they knew God was showing them, but were such that were beyond their understanding. God was speaking by the prophets. When the faithful Moses took out his quill to inscribe the instructions that God had given to Israel, the Spirit of God moved over his legally trained personality to write down the words of God in the language of men. Yet, could he have imagined that the dimensions of the Tabernacle, the laws regarding the altar, the cleansings, and the sacrifices being prescribed were all pointing to the One of whom these were but mere shadows. When the young David ran his fingers on his harp to sing "The Lord's my Shepherd", the Spirit of God did run in his veins to sing in his own rustic, shepherdish way a testimony of trust in the Great Shepherd of all man. Did he ever know that this Great Shepherd would one day walk the same land where he tended his sheep and declare "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd gives His life

for the sheep.” And, when the writers of the Chronicles recorded those lengthy genealogies of the children of Israel, could they ever have foreseen that on this historic line was destined to be born the King of kings, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, who would conquer death and bring life and immortality to light for all who believe. God spoke through the Law. God spoke through poetry, God also spoke through History and through the Prophets. Yet, in all the diversity of styles as diverse as the writers, there was that sacred scarlet thread of unity running throughout the sacred scriptures. God was revealing to humans His Son and speaking to them of grace and salvation. But, the picture was fragmentary. For, it was not time yet for Him to bring the firstbegotten into the world. Therefore, the Scripture also says that “these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb.11:13).

But in these last days, says God’s Word, He has, He has spoken unto us by His Son.

We will look into this more in our next teaching, God willing; but, let me ask you a question: If there was something of ultimate value that you would like God to tell you about, what would that be? What would that one thing be that would determine the meaning and purpose of your life, without which you would know that life had no sense and meaning at all? What would that one revelation be for the sake of which you would be willing to renounce everything else, that one precious gem for which you would be ready to sell everything in order to gain it? For Paul the Apostle, it was the knowledge of Jesus Christ and Eternal Life in Him. For you and me as well, it can’t be anything else. Jesus Himself said, “Without me you can do nothing”. Our lives have no identity nor meaning apart from the meaning that God gives to us through His Son. The Son brings healing, He brings salvation, He brings forgiveness, and gives us a New Life. The Son delivers us from the kingdom of darkness and makes us heirs of His Kingdom of light. I would have liked to end this talk with the testimony of some person somewhere who was saved and transformed by the Truth in Jesus Christ. There are millions of such

testimonies. But, is there any testimony more closer than the testimony that can be you? In these last days, He has spoken to us in His Son. Do you hear His voice? Will you respond to Him and say that you accept Him today when you hear His voice?

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